

UWTSD Research and Impact Accelerator Programme (RIAP)

The University has established a Research and Impact Accelerator Programme (RIAP) to support the delivery of the University's new Research and Innovation Strategy. Supported by Research Wales Innovation Funding, the programme will be run by INSPIRE and has the following six stands:

1. Research Development Awards
2. Knowledge Exchange Awards
3. International Collaboration Award (Taith co-financing)
4. Conference Attendance Awards
5. Researcher Development Fund
6. Impact Ambassadors Scheme

Details of each strand, and how to apply are provided below.

1. Research Development Awards

Research Development Awards are designed to provide flexible support for academic staff to develop high quality research funding applications. While the nature of the support provided will be considered on the merits of applications, the primary purpose of the funds will be to provide extended periods of research leave, typically three months' full-time or pro-rata for part-time leave.

The objectives of the Research Development Awards are to:

- Increase the bidding experience and capacity of staff for competitive research funds, with a focus on UKRI sources (Research Councils and Innovate UK), Horizon Europe and Welsh Government Smart Grants although all research funders will be considered ¹;
- To increase the number of applications submitted;
- To increase the success rate of applications.

Support and outcomes

Research Development Awards provide a period of release from teaching and other administrative duties in order to implement a programme of research activity. The awards therefore give members of academic staff the opportunity to develop their capacity to bid for external research funding in a way that would not otherwise be possible within the normal course of the academic session.

During the period of leave researchers are expected to complete defined outputs and prepare grant applications. The fund is competitive, and not an automatic entitlement, and research development leave will only be granted for projects that address the University's strategic research and innovation priorities.

Eligibility

Applications will be welcomed from all 'teaching and research staff' at all stages in their career (including early career researchers, and staff with particular circumstances), whether in full-time or part-time employment, provided that they meet the other qualifying criteria.

¹ For research involving international collaborations staff should also consider the Welsh Taith programme, and for those considering applications to Horizon Europe, the Score Cymru programme, both of which offer generous support. Applicants may also consider the University's International Collaboration Award (below).

'Research only' staff who do not have teaching loads, or who are employed solely on grant funded projects, are not eligible to apply.

As the principal purpose of the Research Development Fund is to increase grant application rates, applicants are normally expected to have a track record of published research outputs which are suitable for the sources that they are bidding to (e.g. as a guide, at least two publications in the past three years). The fund however can be used to complete research and finalise the publication of outputs which will support grant applications. It may also be used for the purposes of building collaborative networks for bidding purposes. Applicants are also encouraged to consider the other funds in the Research and Impact Accelerator programme, which may increase their 'grant-readiness'. Additional capacity building funding may also be available under the Welsh Taith programme.

Resources

The total fund value is capped and the maximum value of each award cannot exceed £13,500. This is not a target however and budgets should be based on need, and will be scored accordingly. The scheme in the first instance will run on a three-year cycle with anticipated awards in the following ranges (the lower annual number being the minimum awards available):

- AY 21/22: 4-6 awards
- AY 22/23: 7-11 awards
- AY 23/24: 10-15 awards

The requested funds should be proportionate to the planned outputs and the release from teaching and administrative duties that are required to meet them. Match funding from the Institutes or other sources is encouraged, but this is not a condition of making an application for an award.

Staff will normally be released from all other duties e.g. teaching, committee roles, School roles, etc. Staff will normally be required to maintain their PGR supervision duties whilst on research development leave. If essential roles are maintained during the period of research development leave, awards should be made on a pro-rata basis with a clear statement from the Academic Director regarding how the research time will be ring-fenced.

All applications must be discussed and agreed with the relevant Academic Director (the person responsible for academic workload management), and must be costed on the basis indicated in the application budget table. Applicants are also advised to discuss their project plans and / or budgets with INSPIRE before applying.

It is expected the majority of the funds will be allocated for teaching and administrative replacement. However, funds, up to the maximum award value, may be requested for any purpose that will meet the started outputs (e.g. the development and submission of a research grant application), such as travel costs, conference fees, networking and collaborative activity, work supporting impact activities, bid-writing support, and other research expenses for the completion of published outputs.

Reporting

Within one month of the end of the award period, staff will be required to submit a brief, written report to the Research Committee, the activities completed and the research outputs or other outcomes achieved during the research leave. This must be approved by INSPIRE.

Communications

During the period of research development award members of academic staff must be able to be contacted by the Institute if required. As the primary purpose of the awards are to develop funding applications, staff should work in close contact with INSPIRE to develop outputs as per the schedule agreed in the application.

2. Knowledge Exchange Awards

Knowledge Exchange Awards are intended to support activities that strengthen the University's relationships with strategic external partners, maximise the potential for research impact in any sector, and drive commercialisation prospects from University research. Funded through Research Wales Innovation Funding, the awards are a commitment by the University to support staff to initiate high-quality knowledge exchange, engagement and impact generation.

The fund has five broad aims:

- To support researchers to build sustained and strategic relationships of co-creation and knowledge exchange with non-academic partners, including, for example, laying the groundwork for applications to collaborative schemes such as Horizon Europe or Innovate UK, or helping to leverage funds from the private sector, government, RTOs and regional development funds;
- To support researchers to develop collaborative research programmes and proposals with external partners that strengthen funding applications to the UK Research Councils, for example by developing high quality impact plans and partnership working;
- To provide early-stage investment in technologies destined for commercialisation (i.e. technical proof of concept and commercial proof of market) to support the de-risking of these opportunities;
- To support research-based community and public engagement initiatives, locally and/or internationally, that drive mutually beneficial interactions around research through for example, regional regeneration or civic mission activities;
- To nurture a sustainable pipeline of new impact case studies and success stories from across the University.

Activities Supported

INSPIRE welcomes applications from members of the University's research and knowledge exchange staff which drive the areas of impact identified in the Research and Innovation Strategy. Whilst not an exhaustive list, some examples of eligible activities are:

- Secondments of staff, PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and research assistants between the University and a non-academic partner organisation, company or agency from any sector, to develop longer term strategic partnerships and insights. Secondments can be flexible; part-time or full-time, ranging in duration from weeks to months. Teaching buy out is available for this purpose.
- To fund fellowships and internships to concentrate on specific knowledge exchange projects leading to defined innovation / impact outcomes;
- De-risking of research outputs/outcomes for commercial or uptake in other sectors, including market assessments, toolkit development, prototype and demonstrator development, proof-of-concept activity and application-focused feasibility projects.
- Engagement with policy-makers and practitioners at any stage of the research-impact cycle, for example through events, knowledge exchange workshops,

collaborative toolkit development, collaborative activity to co-produce evidence, and/or mechanisms to ensure the uptake of that evidence.

- Engagement with existing businesses or organisations in other sectors to foster new collaborative relationships, or deepen or broaden existing relationships, including through attendance at key sectoral events.
- Engagement with communities to pursue new research agendas, to increase the uptake of relevant research outcomes, and other public engagement and civic mission initiatives. These should be structured in a way that reflects a collaborative, co-creative approach and supports the creation of strong, well-evidenced impact.

Eligible Costs

The funding is designed to be flexible and can cover items such as:

- Staff costs (e.g. teaching release)
- Consumables
- Travel and subsistence
- Workshops and seminars

While co-financing is not a condition of the awards, applicants are encouraged to secure either cash or in-kind contributions to the cost of the project from non-academic organisations. In-kind contributions could include specific staff time undertaking part of the project, access to equipment, provision of materials or other items. For further guidance on the expectations around match funding/support, please speak to INSPIRE.

Eligibility

Applications will be welcomed from all 'research' and 'teaching and research staff' at all stages in their career (including early career researchers, and staff with particular circumstances), whether in full-time or part-time employment, provided that they meet the other qualifying criteria.

Resources

Research Impact and Innovation Awards are based on need, with an indicative maximum of £2000. It is anticipated that awards in the following ranges will be made:

- AY 21/22: 6 awards
- AY 22/23: 12 awards
- AY 23/24: 12 awards

Reporting

Within one month of the end of the award staff will be required to submit a brief, written report to the Research Committee, the activities completed and the research outputs or other outcomes achieved during the research leave. This must be approved by INSPIRE.

3. International Collaboration Award

Welsh Government has launched the Taith scheme, which provides important support for developing international collaborative capacity in research and knowledge exchange. This includes improving staff research and professional skills and developing UWTSD's international research partnerships and links. Three pathways for the scheme have been provisionally announced, with a full programme guide forthcoming in summer 2022². The

² Guidance for the International Collaboration Award will be revised at this point.

International Collaboration Award is available to co-finance activity under Pathway 1, Research Mobility, which will support the physical outward and inward mobility of early career and established researchers to:

- Undergo research placements or secondments, including opportunities for networking and training at a partner higher education institution, research institute, R&D focussed industry, or other relevant workplace abroad;
- Collaborate on joint research proposals or papers with researchers at partner organisations abroad; and/or
- Participate in collaborative activities and/or field work, including gaining access to specialist facilities, infrastructure and equipment across the globe.

Eligibility

Applications will be welcomed from all 'research' and 'teaching and research staff' at all stages in their career (including early career researchers, and staff with particular circumstances), whether in full-time or part-time employment, provided that they meet the other qualifying criteria.

Resources

Funding for Researcher Mobility in Taith is limited to support to meet the travel and subsistence costs associated with researcher mobility. Funding is not provided for researcher salaries or costs associated with research, including consumables, bench fees, overheads or other ancillary costs. The International Collaboration Award will therefore provide UWTSD co-financing for staff buy-out costs (e.g. teaching relief) where this is required to undertake the researcher mobility. Please note that this is not a stand-alone scheme, and is limited to co-financing for researcher motilities funded through Taith. Co-financing will be provided on a needs-basis based on actual teaching replacement costs, but will be capped at 30 hours / £2000.

It is anticipated that the following awards will be available

- AY 21/22: 5 awards
- AY 22/23: 10 awards
- AY 23/24: 10 awards

Application Process

Applications to the International Collaboration Award must be made in conjunction with applications to the Taith programme. An initial call for Expressions of Interest for Taith researcher motilities will be made in March 2022.

4. Conference Attendance Awards

The purpose of Conference Attendance Awards is to develop the grant-readiness of the University's research staff and to increase the number and quality of grant applications submitted. To meet these purposes, applications are invited from academic staff who are presenting a paper based on an ongoing programme of research. This research should include peer-reviewed published outputs in a form which is clearly established in the relevant discipline (normally journal articles, book chapters and monographs, but also practice based outputs in the arts). The research must also be aligned to the research and innovation themes, strategic action plans and targets in the UWTSD Research and Innovation Strategy.

In making an application, staff must demonstrate the direct benefits from attending the conference³, such as:

- Feedback on an early version of your latest work,
- Understanding important developments in the field of study / advancing the state-of-the-art,
- Engage in high-level debates and refine your ideas,
- Networking and developing identified collaborative opportunities,
- Enhance CV as required for specified funding sources,
- Contribution to grant-readiness and the development of a funding application.

Eligibility

Applications are welcomed from all 'teaching and research staff' and 'research only' staff at all stages in their career (including early career researchers, and staff with particular circumstances), whether in full-time or part-time employment, provided that they meet the other qualifying criteria. Staff on teaching only contracts (e.g. employed on an hourly paid basis) and PGR students, are not eligible for the awards.

Resources

The total fund value is capped and the maximum value of each award cannot exceed £500 for UK conferences and £1,000 for those overseas. An additional £200 is available in either case to support those with caring-responsibilities (e.g. for additional childcare) or other personal circumstances. The scheme in the first instance will run on a three-year cycle with anticipated awards in the following ranges (the lower annual number being the minimum awards available):

- AY 21/22 and AY 22/23: 12-8 awards
- AY 22/23: 18-25 awards
- AY 23/24: 18-25 awards

The funds can cover conference fees, travel and subsistence, at the rates set out in the UWTSD financial regulations.

Application Process

While firm acceptance of a paper is not required at the application and approval stage, awards will be made on a provisional basis with final approval for the release of funds made once the paper is accepted.

Applications will be assessed by a panel constituted by the INSPIRE Management Group and the Chair of the Research Committee.

Reporting

Within one month of the end of the award staff will be required to submit a brief, written report to the Research Committee, the activities completed and the research outputs or other outcomes achieved during the research leave. This must be approved by INSPIRE.

³ The term conference is used in the broadest sense, and may include other research forums such as symposia, colloquia, seminars, network events etc.

5. Researcher Development Fund

The University is a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (commonly known as the Researcher Development Concordat). INSPIRE are leading on the development and implementation of the Concordat action plan, working closely with Human Resources, the Institutes and other professional services. A key component will be the launch of a new researcher development programme. Details of the programme, and funding to support staff, will be announced shortly for commencement in AY 2022/23.

6. Impact Ambassadors Scheme

Details of the scheme will be announced in due course, with the first call for applications in AY 2022/23

Equality and Diversity

INSPIRE, in implementing the operational aspects of the Research and Impact Accelerator Programme, will have a responsibility to take into account all relevant equality and diversity considerations. It will therefore conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the process for approving applications to ensure that the criteria for applying for leave does not disadvantage any groups of staff.